Report on Community Energy Forum

On 5th Feb 2020 a Community Energy Forum day was held in the Guildhall, Bath

Amongst many attendees, were Richard Maccabee and Andrew Jeffryes.

All of the presentations are well worth reading, and are available at

https://wessexce.net/bath-february-5th-2020/

Key points for BPC

1. B&NES and Wiltshire councils are both aiming to be carbon neutral, as a council, by 2030, and ideally, for their whole area to also be carbon neutral…
2. B&NES has a number of Climate Change priorities for the next 8 years, outlined in their presentation. Although 'priorities', not 'targets', they are numerical, and are the basis for B&NES policies and working practices now. They will all need to be reviewed for their impact on
    a. BPC Neighbourhood Plan – in particular, there are Govt rules governing some aspects of planning for renewable energy, whereby if the NP plan does not plan for these, then they cannot happen. BPC, with the Village, needs to decide what it wants to happen – and this is not something that can be delayed too long
    b. Some of these impact Planning applications – BPC needs to become more Climate aware in how it reviews planning applications.
3. Two local councils gave presentations – Stroud and Frome. Stroud has been in the lead in this area for many years – the council became carbon neutral in 2015. Both councils are showing the way – and would be worth consulting as Batheaston takes its own steps to become more Climate Emergency aware and looks at taking practical measures to help.
4. Bath and West Community Energy are the key player in this area, for energy schemes. They raise funds via community share offers, and spend the money on renewable schemes, paying a dividend, plus community grants to the areas with schemes. They are looking for sites and are getting involved with EV Car Clubs and Charging – relevant to BPC. A very helpful and knowledgeable organisation

The main takeaways are

- 2030 is only 10 years away – making the councils carbon neutral is relatively easy, making the County/region carbon neutral is a huge effort – it can only be done by everyone playing their part, and it will take a big change of culture, for most people.
- We have exemplars out there – we need to make use of them – councils and community energy groups/companies – there are a lot of people keen to work together.
- BPC will need to make Climate Emergency central to the NP – i.e test everything in it against – does this enable us to meet the overall B&NES Priorities – if not – then what do we need to change, to make it so ?
- BPC will need to energise the village and parish – its not for one council/15 councillors to do – its for all the people in the Parish to do, with enthusiasm.
- BPC needs to engage with B&NES over this year – as B&NES develops its action plans, BPC needs to influence, understand, and then work out how to work within them.